CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1583
1 April 1999

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 31 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT MADE BY MR. B.N. YELTSIN, PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, ON 24 MARCH 1999 IN CONNECTION WITH THE MILITARY ACTION BY NATO IN YUGOSLAVIA

I have the honour to transmit a statement made by the President of the Russian Federation, B.N. Yeltsin, on 24 March 1999, in connection with the military action by NATO in Yugoslavia.

I would be grateful if this statement could be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed among the delegations of all member States of the CD participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed:) Vasily SIDOROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation
to the Conference on Disarmament

GE.99-61160 (E)

Statement by the President of the Russian Federation

NATO's military action against sovereign Yugoslavia, which is nothing other than naked aggression, has caused profound indignation in Russia.

The United Nations Security Council alone has the right to decide which measures, including force, should be taken to uphold or restore international peace and security. The Security Council has taken no such decisions concerning Yugoslavia. Not only the Charter of the United Nations, but also the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between Russia and NATO, have been breached. A dangerous precedent has been set for the revival of the policy of imposing one's will by force, and the entire modern international legal order has been jeopardized.

In fact, what is involved is an attempt by NATO to enter the twenty-first century in the uniform of a world policeman. Russia will never agree to this.

The United Nations Security Council should examine the situation which has developed and demand the immediate cessation of NATO's actions involving the use of force.

For its part, the leadership of the Russian Federation will review its links with NATO as an organization which has displayed a lack of respect for the basic underpinnings of the system of international relations.

In my capacity as President and Supreme Commander I have already given orders to:

- Cut short the visit to the United States by the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, E.M. Primakov;

- Demand the urgent convening of a meeting of the United Nations Security Council and the immediate halting of the military action by NATO;

- Recall to Moscow the Russian Federation's chief military representative to NATO;

- Suspend our participation in the "Partnership for Peace" programme and the implementation of the programme falling under the Russia-NATO partnership;

- Postpone talks on the opening of a NATO military communications mission in Moscow.

I have already contacted United States President B. Clinton, and I also call on the leaders of other NATO member States to put an immediate end to this military adventure, which threatens the lives of peaceable people and may cause an explosion in the Balkans.

The situation in Kosovo, like other similar problems, can be resolved only through negotiations. The sooner they are resumed, the more scope the international community will have to find a political settlement. Russia is ready to continue to work closely with the other members of the Contact Group in order to achieve this goal.

Those who embarked on this military adventure will bear full responsibility before their peoples and the world community for its extremely grave consequences for international stability. In the event that the military conflict spreads, Russia reserves the right to take appropriate measures, including military measures, to ensure its own security and that of Europe as a whole.

24 March 1999